



Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
Public Hearing on Housing Policy before the Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Patricia Gallalee, Chair
December 1, 2011

Good evening. My name is Patricia Gallalee and I am speaking on behalf of the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities. I want to take this opportunity to share with you our recommendations for developing and funding housing for the upcoming ten years. **To meet with housing demands of the future, we need more ACCESSIBLE and affordable housing and we want to share with you an overview of what is happening elsewhere:**

1. Many communities have required that all publicly funded housing be built to specifications of visitable/livable (reported by AARP)
2. DC has introduced a bill that would require visitable and liveable features in all publicly funded housing
3. Maryland has passed legislation that requires builders of 11 units or more to offer livable/visitable features as options
4. Virginia has proposed an incentive to builders and homeowners that include or add visitable or livable features to their homes
5. Some communities require all new housing be visitable and livable, example Pima Arizona
6. Baltimore City requires visitable/livable features in all housing that is publicly funded
7. HUD provides developer points for projects that include visitable and livable features

We recommend to you to:

- In new construction of mixed use developments where stores are on the first floor and housing is on the upper levels, require that the housing be accessible by requiring elevators.
- Introduce legislation to require that new construction and renovation of publicly funded housing be required to meet minimal accessibility such as having one no step entrance.
- Introduce legislation to require that new construction and renovation of Moderately Priced Dwelling units be required to meet minimal accessibility such as having one no step entrance.
- We recommend that the County provide an incentive to builders and homeowners that include or add visitable or livable features to their homes; i.e. a reduction in permitting fees.
- Increased education and outreach for the Design for Life Montgomery “visit-ability” program in cooperation with permitting services by creating a resource there to help market the program more than they are now able when folks come in for building permits.
- Technical assistance to families for cost effective ways to modify their homes when a member has a mobility disability in consultation with DHCA, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) or permitting services
- Modification grants to landlords that promise to leave the accessibility improvements in place and match the grant money with their funds.
- Replicating the current program for people with spinal cord injury that has been demonstrated at Metropointe. We have identified 900 people living in MC nursing homes under the age of 60 who have indicated they want to live in the community.
- Develop community housing for young people with brain injury

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment this evening. To promote a more inclusive community, please know that we are here as a partner to assist you in anyway that we can,